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INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
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RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: SHEIKH AWEYS: LIVE FROM ASMARA

¶1. (SBU) Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys led a televised press conference with Al-Jazeera in Asmara on May 15. In the conference, Aweys condemned the members of the Asmara-based Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) who traveled to Djibouti for UN-brokered discussions with Somali's Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

¶2. (SBU) The press conference featured Sheikh Aweys along with five members of the ARS, all of whom objected to the May 10-15 ARS-TFG discussions in Djibouti. Accordingly, Aweys accused the individuals participating in the Djibouti talks as illegally representing the ARS and warned that whatever documents are produced and/or signed in Djibouti will have no bearing on the ARS as a whole. Aweys, touted by many of his Somali colleagues and Eritrean officials as one of the most liberal and forward-thinking members of the former Council of Islamic Courts, used the press conference to publicly demand full Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia before multilateral discussions could take place.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: The press conference, hosted at a hotel in Asmara, also received favorable coverage by Eri-TV, Eritrean's primary broadcast network. Aweys' vehemence against negotiation with the TFG indicates the widening rift between the pro- and anti-discussion factions of the Asmara-based Somali exile community, and possibly the end of the ARS multi-factional alliance of convenience that was clearly shaky since its inception in Septemeber 2007. End Comment.
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